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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1240

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY

RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0052

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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001244

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

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SUBJECT: TFH01: SPEAKING TO PRESIDENT-ELECT LOBO

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1231

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Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b & d)

11. (S) Summary: The Ambassador spoke to President-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo on November 3. They discussed the results of the congressional vote rejecting President Zelaya's restoration. Both agreed that the process, despite U.S. disappointment, was done in a transparent and open way. Lobo cited his public statements in support of the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord, including his call for national reconciliation, the creation of a government of national unity, and the establishment of a truth commission. The Ambassador pointed out that in the wake of the elections and the restoration vote, it was imperative for regime leader Micheletti to step down. Micheletti's resignation would enhance the legitimacy and international acceptance of Lobo and his new government. Lobo agreed and said he planned to discuss this issue directly with Micheletti later today. He said that he appreciated U.S. support, as well as the help of Panamanian President Martinelli, Cardinal Rodriguez and others, in convincing Micheletti to step down. End Summary.

12. (S) The Ambassador spoke to President-elect Pepe Lobo on December 3 to review the situation in the wake of the congressional decision not to restore President Zelaya. Lobo noted that he had not pressed his party to take any specific position on the issue of restitution since he understood that nearly all of the National Party deputies had supported the June 28 decree that had removed Zelaya from office. He said that he had allowed the party's congressional leadership and delegation to form its own position. However, he said he had insisted as per an earlier discussion (reftel) that the congressional deliberations be done in a transparent manner, ensuring live media coverage, an open floor debate, and a roll call vote. The Ambassador noted that while we were disappointed (not surprised) by the vote, we recognized that the congressional deliberations had been conducted in a very professional and dignified manner.

13. (S) Lobo added that as he had pledge to the Ambassador, he had issued public statements via radio and television last

night and again this morning in which he sent a clear message of support for the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord (TSJA). In his statements he had stressed the importance of achieving national reconciliation and the need to promote a national dialogue. He also expressed his support for the creation of a government of national unity consistent with the TSJA, and said he would also work to establish a Truth Commission after he assumed office on January 27, 2010. Lobo also mentioned his intention of creating a government of national unity of multi-party representation after he assumed the presidency.

¶4. (S) The Ambassador reiterated that the November 29 election, Lobo's and the National Party's strong popular mandate, and the congressional action rejecting Zelaya's restitution had completely changed the political equation. The Ambassador reiterated that it was imperative that regime leader Micheletti resign immediately and allow for the creation of a government of national unity to serve in a transition role until Lobo assumed the presidency on January 27. The Ambassador stressed that in numerous occasions Micheletti had publicly stated that he would not stay one moment longer than necessary once Zelaya gave up his claim to return to office. The Ambassador said that it in the wake of the congressional decision of December 2 denying Zelaya's restitution, it was imperative that Micheletti agree to step down. The Ambassador noted that the U.S. was not seeking winners and losers in the crisis and had no personal animosity towards Micheletti or any of his officials. However, it was clear that Micheletti's resignation would help Lobo and his National Party gain wider international recognition.

¶5. (S) Lobo agreed with the U.S. position on the need for Micheletti to step down. He said that he had spoken to

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Panamanian President Martinelli and that Martinelli took the same position as the U.S. with regards to the need for Micheletti to step down. Lobo confirmed that he was scheduled to meet with Micheletti in a few minutes at the Casa Presidencial and planned to ask him to give him the space he needed to move forward and begin to consolidate his government. Lobo said that Martinelli had agreed to call Micheletti later today and discuss the resignation. Lobo added that he had spoken to Cardinal Rodriguez and that the Cardinal also understood that Micheletti needed to resign and was willing to speak to him. The Ambassador noted that the U.S., as he knew, was directly engaged and that we were in contact with Martinelli, Arias and other key players in Honduras and outside working towards the same objective. Both agreed to speak later today and to meet at the Chancery tomorrow at 0930 hrs.
LLORENS